

Message Text

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14

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FM AMCONSUL BELFAST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1168

INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USNAVCOMMSTA LONDONDERRY

UNCLAS BELFAST 037

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, U.K. (N.I.)

SUBJECT: VANGUARD PARTY CALLS FOR REFERENDUM ON COALITION

1. VANGUARD PARTY LEADER WILLIAM CRAIG HAS CALLED FOR REFERENDUM ON VOLUNTARY COALITION GOVERNMENT. IT BELIEVED THREE OF THE FOUR VANGUARD CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION MEMBERS (MINUS GLENN BARR) DISCUSSED SUBJECT WITH CONVENTION CHAIRMAN SIR ROBERT LOWRY JAN. 22 AND PLAN INTRODUCE PROPOSAL ON FLOOR OF CONVENTION. TENTATIVE WORDING OF REFERENDUM QUESTION: "IN ORDER TO OBTAIN AN AGREEMENT WITHIN THE TERMS OF THE MAJORITY PROPOSALS WOULD YOU SUPPORT A BROADLY-BASED VOLUNTARY COALITION FOR THE TERM OF THE FIRST PARLIAMENT? YES/NO." BUSINESS COMMITTEE WITH MAJORITY UNITED ULSTER UNIONIST COALITION (UUUC) COULD REFUSE ENTER PROPOSAL ON AGENDA FOR CONVENTION BUT CRAIG WILL THEN ENTER PRIVATE MOTION WHICH CANNOT BE BLOCKED.

2. ALLIANCE PARTY WELCOMED INITIATIVE BUT SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND LABOUR PARTY (SDLP) MORE CAUTIOUS. SDLP STATEMENT RENEWED PARTY WILLINGNESS CONTINUE (OR RESUME) INTER PARTY TALKS ON SUBJECT AND WELCOMED VANGUARD PROPOSAL "WITHIN THAT CONTEXT." SDLP WILL WANT FIRM ASSURANCES ON DEFINITIONS AND TIME PERIOD "TERM OF FIRST PARLIAMENT" BEFORE IT COULD CONSIDER OFFERING SUPPORT TO REFERENDUM.

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DISCUSSION OF COALITION PROPOSAL AND REFERENDUM ON

CONVENTION FLOOR HOWEVER WILL AT LEAST CLARIFY ISSUES
FOR ELECTORATE.

SPICER

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NNN

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